

The Journal

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America Can Achieve a Stable, Affordable Supply of Energy Rep. Pete Olson

Gas prices in the Houston region are currently on average \$3.39 per gallon, up from \$2.57 just one year ago. Unrest in Libya and the Middle East is one factor driving the price. Another is the crushing energy regulations and policies coming out of the Obama Administration.

Democrats have suggested that one option to lower costs is to tap into the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR). That would be a mistake. The SPR, managed by the Department of Energy, exists for moments of true national emergency when there is a dramatic disruption in oil supplies, as when Hurricane Katrina devastated part of the Gulf Coast and interrupted oil supplies. The current high pump prices are a national concern—but playing politics with a national security asset is not the way to address the problem. If we tap our reserve to manipulate the price of oil, we defeat the purpose of the reserve.

The right solution is to stop the crushing federal regulations being implemented by the Obama Administration that have not only halted energy production, but will also continue to increase the cost of domestic energy production.

A large portion of our nation's resources have been blocked off by federal restrictions. These

restrictions prohibit the use of huge amounts of resources our nation could tap to lower our dependence on foreign sources of energy. Existing resources have also been stalled through the needless moratorium on offshore drilling that was put into place after the Deep Water Horizon oil spill. The Interior Department's failure to issue new permits has essentially extended the drilling moratorium indefinitely for no rhyme or reason.

Closer to home the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has usurped Congressional authority by interpreting the Clean Air Act to include the regulation of greenhouse gas emissions. Estimates show that the greenhouse gas regulations will have a crushing and costly impact on businesses large and small, as well as all consumers, with little environmental benefit. The EPA has moved without congressional approval to regulate these gases, such as carbon dioxide, as part of the Obama Administration's controversial global warming/climate change initiative.

The feasibility of regulating greenhouse gases on the scale President Obama proposes is not only in doubt, but the cost of doing so would impose a massive, crippling new energy tax. These taxes will harm

families and businesses in America at a time when our economy is still struggling. The Obama Administration's failed energy policies, the unrest in the Middle East and the EPA's overregulation will only further drive up gas prices. The Clean Air Act was never intended to regulate greenhouse gases and only Congress has the constitutional authority to make changes to that law - not the EPA. America needs a comprehensive, all of the above energy plan that provides affordable and reliable energy for our nation.

Opening up more of our own nation's resources, issuing permits for areas already approved for production and stopping the EPA's overreach will provide the private sector the certainty it needs to help create jobs and get our economy back on track.